

The Baptist Record

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AFTER THE VOLCANO

Colombian toddler's picture stirs queries about adoption

IBAGUE, Colombia (BP)—The toddler was crying, "Mami." He had been separated from his mother for a week; perhaps he'll never see her again because of the wall of mud and debris that buried the town of Armero in Colombia's Andes Mountains.

His picture, taken by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board photographer Joanna Pinneo, has stirred national attention. It was distributed by the Associated Press and carried in newspapers in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and 600 to 700 other cities.

"NN" is the only way he's identified in the state hospital at Ibague, 70 miles south of Armero, where 25,000 to 40,000 people lost their lives when a mudslide roared down the slopes of volcano Nevado del Ruiz after its Nov. 13 eruption.

Numerous inquiries were received at AP bureaus from people wanting to adopt him. But children who lost their parents in the mudslide are likely to be assimilated into Colombian families, according to Bryan Brasington, FMB director for western South America, who visited Colombia in late November.

"It's much better for them to be in an environment where their language is spoken and they do not have to make additional adjustments so abruptly," Brasington said.

"There still is some hope for some of these to be reunited with family members or close relatives," he said. On Nov. 26, for example, a mother, who thought her husband and several children were dead, was reunited with a 12-year-old son, who also had thought he was alone.

Engaging in a ministry of hope to survivors young and old are students from the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali in southwest Colombia.

The seminarians are "trying to give (the victims) assurance and hope that there is a future, that God loves and has a great concern for them personally," Brasington said.

The students are visiting in hospitals and shelters and, when addresses are available, homes and apartments where victims have taken refuge with relatives.

The teams are looking for opportunities to provide food and other assistance, Brasington said.

Assessing the outlook of many victims, Robert Edwards, Southern Baptist missionary physician, said, "They seem to be in a state of hopelessness."



This toddler, apparently orphaned by Colombia's killer mudslide Nov. 13, cried for his mother as Southern Baptist missionary Mary Nell Giles entered his hospital room in Ibague. Offered a toy poodle, the child continued to cry until the missionary took him in her arms. This photo, carried nationwide by Associated Press, prompted inquiries about adoption, but Colombians hope most such children can be assimilated into Colombian families. (BP) PHOTO by Joanna Pinneo.

The seminarians' help is needed because there's just one Baptist congregation in the Ibague area, a sad fact as far as James Giles, Southern Baptist disaster relief coordinator in Colombia, is concerned. "In all our efforts to share the gospel in Colombia, we Southern Baptists hadn't gotten to Armero in 44 years," the length of

time missionaries have been assigned to the country.

To brighten the Christmas season for children who survived Armero, Brasington took more than 200 musical toys to Ibague donated by Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church, Richmond.



Maria del Carmen de Alvarez helps with mealtime at a temporary shelter for victims. A member of Bogota's Central Baptist church, Alvarez "didn't want to sit in front of the television" watching thousands of Colombians suffer after volcano Nevado del Ruiz erupted Nov. 13. The neighborhood nurse from Bogota arranged for a ride to Ibague and got to work, at one point helping rescue a victim one week after a mudslide destroyed the town of Armero. (BP) PHOTO by Joanna Pinneo.

Nurse turns off television travels to help Colombians

By Art Toalston

IBAGUE, Colombia (BP) — Maria del Carmen de Alvarez stepped past 10 corpses to reach a man covered with dry mud. In agony from numerous infected wounds, he loudly vented his heartache, "My children, my children, where are my children?"

Alvarez, a neighborhood nurse and a member of Bogota's Central Baptist Church, knew the man somehow had survived a full week in the hardened aftermath of the eruption of volcano Nevado del Ruiz. She, plus five Colombian soldiers and five rescue workers, laboring under stifling heat, placed the young man aboard a hospital-bound helicopter.

His physical suffering demanded far more medical expertise than Alvarez could provide.

Still, the 47-year-old mother of four sought to minister during the flight. The victim had ceased his yelling and Alvarez, sensing that he could hear, asked tenderly, "Do you know that God loves you? He loves you so much because he has not called you to his presence. He wants to give you another opportunity to trust in him."

A soldier nearby was motivated by thankfulness for the good health of her children and for new skills from a community health

To the soldier, Alvarez replied, "It's true about you, too, that God is giving you another chance to hear his message." A second soldier sided with Alvarez, saying, "That's true. God is using us to give life to these people." To Alvarez, he said, "I can tell you're an evangelical."

"Yes, I'm a Christian," Alvarez replied before resuming her witness. "Repent of your sins," she counseled the traumatized man, "and trust in Jesus." He began weeping just as the helicopter approached the hospital landing pad.

She decided on her own to travel to Ibague to help survivors from Armero and the surrounding region buried by a monstrous mudslide after Nevado del Ruiz erupted Nov. 13.

Except for a ride to Ibague with Southern Baptist missionaries Nov. 18 and lodging with new acquaintances here, she said she had not asked anybody for anything.

"I didn't want to sit in front of the television and see the suffering," Alvarez continued. "Rather, I wanted to come and be of service." She also

course at the Baptist Clinic in Barranquilla.

Disaster relief work "has made me develop more love for people, even though I've always served with love," said the veteran of nearly 30 years in nursing. "Spiritually, I'm very rich; materially, I'm very poor, but I give what I can, which is service to God to help others."

Alvarez reported to a disaster relief center after arriving in Ibague and was told she could sort clothing. Believing she should do more, she boarded a bus to head toward a school that had been turned into a temporary hospital on the outskirts of Ibague.

That morning she treated 30 patients; that afternoon she agreed to look for a hospitalized mother's lost child. The helicopter rescue mission interrupted her unsuccessful search for the child.

Alvarez intends to continue working wherever she's needed in Ibague, simply "waiting for the Lord to indicate how long I should stay."

Toalston writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Editorials by don mcgregor

Creche for Christmas

Comes now the time to discuss again the use of a creche, or nativity scene, in public Christmas displays across the nation. The subject has come up again because the use of a creche is planned in Washington, D.C., in a public Christmas display sponsored by the National Park Service and positioned near the White House.

It is not against the law. The Supreme Court has rightly ruled that nativity scenes are all right at Christmas. It did so, however, for the wrong reason. The reason for its ruling was that nativity scenes have become secular symbols of Christmas such as Santa Claus for Christmas trees.

Such a reason, of course, comes from absolutely false thinking. There is not any way that a nativity scene can be secular in nature. It is a religious symbol and there is no way that that it can be anything else. We need to insist that it is a religious symbol; and if the Supreme Court insists that no religious symbols be used in public Christmas displays, then we need to take down our public nativity scenes.

The use of "public" is meant to denote those displays sponsored by public agencies, not church-sponsored displays that are on view for the public.

Regardless of the fact that nativity scenes are religious in nature, however, we still must continue to insist that they are to be acceptable in Christmas displays. We don't have to celebrate Christmas; but if we are to do so, we cannot separate the observation of Christmas from a nativity scene. That is what Christmas is all about. We might as well insist on

observing the Fourth of July without the American flag as to celebrate Christmas without the possibility of having a nativity scene.

The world may enjoy our holiday; but if others are going to observe it, there is no reason why they shouldn't be made aware of why it is being observed. If that becomes a religious witness, and it should, then so be it.

It is a Christian observation. Non-Christians must not be allowed to take it over and strip it of its significance.

Christmas is the observation of the birth of Christ. That is an unalterable fact. Christ is the leader of the Christian movement. Congress has made the birthday of Martin Luther King a national holiday. It would make as much sense to insist that there be no pictures of Martin Luther King on his birthday as it would to insist that there be no nativity scenes displayed on Christmas.

The Supreme Court is right. Nativity scenes must be allowed to be displayed at Christmas; but not, however, because they have become secular in nature. They must be allowed because they represent the reason for having a Christmas observation.

One might argue that the principle of the separation of church and state would dictate that we not have a national observation of a religious holiday such as Christmas.

If we are to observe it in public establishments, however, it is contrary to reason to insist that nativity scenes not be allowed to be a part of whatever displays are to be presented.

The observation of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ regardless of whether or not one is a Christian. If it is to be observed, it must be allowed to be observed for its rightful purpose.

Nativity scenes must be allowed because they depict the birth of Christ, the reason we have Christmas.

We can have Christmas displays without nativity scenes. That is not the issue. Some people might not want them because they would rather not have some material object that would be used in representing the Lord at his physical birth.

To be told, however, that a nativity scene could not be used in a Christmas display because of the religious nature of the scene would be contrary to reason. Christmas is



religious; and, if it is to be celebrated at all, the religious nature of it must not be ruled out.

Therefore the Supreme Court was right—nativity scenes are acceptable Christmas display elements. It was wrong, however, in declaring that

nativity scenes have become secular concepts.

The birth of Christ transcended both the religious and the secular. It cannot, however, be held as being only secular. It ushered in the Christian era.

Guest opinion . . .

On the threshold of a new century (Christmas Eve 1999)

Part one of two parts
By John Martens

The advance listening post high up on the ice-covered plateau of northern central Greenland was only one in the chain of such strategically located positions spread out across Arctic North America.

Here in the eternal silence reigning on Greenland's ice cap, approximately one-hundred miles North of the enormous American base Thule, a team of military experts, hardy young men, rigorously trained to cope with the harsh climatic conditions of their high altitude Arctic environment, kept up a continuous watch toward the North through their highly sensitive listening gear.

And their advanced television cameras and the antennae of their radio receivers were all aimed toward the North where, beyond the geographical North Pole along the shores of the islands off the Siberian coast, the Russians had built a similar network of military listening posts.

In his Arctic hut, where he never strayed far from his instruments and sensitive listening gear, Bill Delaney was thinking of home and of the preparations for Christmas. He longed to be home now, for this was to be the last Christmas of the 20th century, a memorable occasion indeed, if only for a few hours to be able to talk to his wife and play with his young son under the Christmas tree. He imagined how together with his wife he would show the little boy in the Children's Bible the pictures of little Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem and of Mary and Joseph with the donkey and of animals in a stable and of gorgeous-

ly dressed Kings from afar, some with dark skin, and of Shepherds with crooked staffs, bending on one knee before the little child while whispering excitedly to each other.

And Bill thought how happy his aging parents would be to see him come home for a short leave and to lay eyes again on their eldest son. And, of course, his younger brothers would want to hear all about Greenland's permanent winter darkness and about polar bears and about the mysterious Russians dwelling over the Arctic horizon.

Bill listened. Not much else to do here. All around darkness and Polar night and silence. His radio receiver emitted a short beep and another one. Nothing special. And then it was quiet as before. He reached for the switch on his television camera, an extremely powerful apparatus that picked up visual evidence of everything that went on up to a distance of nearly a thousand miles. It was part of Bill's task to switch on the knob at set times to record what was going on up North on the other side of the pole, and Bill's TV camera was specifically aimed at one or two Russian listening posts at the Northern end of Novaya Zemlja. An automatic film camera instantly recorded the received T.V. pictures, and once or twice a week on all-weather helicopter picked up the films for evaluation at intelligence headquarters at Thule.

Another beep came over the radio receiver, followed by a series of long whistles. Listening intently through his earphones, however, Bill did not

hear any conversation going on between some of his Russian counterparts whom he suspected of trying to trick him into listening and divert his attention while they perhaps themselves related important information to their own headquarters by a different channel.

Taking off his earphones, Bill opened a flap in the side of his Arctic hut. He thought he heard the drone of plane engines, and indeed far to the North the faint noise of powerful engines was audible. It grew in intensity for a while and then it faded un-

(Continued on page 10)

Sunday shopping

The opening of the Northpark shopping mall in Madison County has created a renewed interest in the state's "blue law," which prohibits the sale of certain items on Sunday.

The problem arose because the city of Jackson would not allow Sunday sales in Metro Center, which is a Jackson mall, while just across the county line in Ridgeland the new Northpark mall had stores doing retail business on Sundays. Metro Center claimed this established unfair competition, and so the stores there began to remain open.

The state has removed itself from the controversy because the Legislature established the practice of allowing the separate municipalities to make the decisions.

Thus Northpark was open and Metro Center was not until it took matters into its own hands.

Baptists generally are opposed to Sunday sales and actually hold the key to the situation. As Mississippi Baptists decide, so will be the decision for Mississippi.

If Mississippi Baptists stay out of

the stores on Sunday, they will be closed. If Mississippi Baptists shop on Sunday, the stores will be open.

We believe in a day of rest and worship. For Christians, generally, that day should be Sunday. There are a few Christians who worship on Saturday, but there are not likely many in Mississippi. Jewish people, of course, worship on Saturday; so when we insist on Sunday closing and Saturday sales, we are creating somewhat of a problem for them.

But be that as it may, Baptists still hold the key. Whatever our decision is, so will the decision be for the state.

At this point our decision has been to open the stores on Sundays and keep sales people from worship and families.

Are we interested in a change? We should be.

If it comes about, however, it will be because we have refused to shop in the stores on Sunday, not because of laws being passed. As long as we shop on Sunday, the stores will be open, regardless of the law.

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BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 3

Southern Baptist Convention sued for "irreparable" harm

ATLANTA (BP) — A Birmingham, Ala., couple and a retired Navy chief from Windsor, Mo., filed suit Dec. 5 against the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee in federal district court in Atlanta.

The suit, filed by Robert S. Crowder and his wife, Julia, and Henry C. Cooper, claims the plaintiffs were "irreparably harmed" by rulings and events at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, June 12, 1985, concerning election of the SBC Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees.

The suit seeks to have the election of the SBC Committee on Boards declared illegal and to prevent the 52 persons elected at the Dallas convention from serving. It has also asked "relief . . . to prevent the defendants from violating the legal rights of the plaintiffs during the 1986 annual meeting, June 10-12, in Atlanta."

The Committee on Boards nominates persons to serve as trustees of the national agencies of the SBC, including the six seminaries. They are elected at one convention and bring their report to the subsequent convention.

The committee is expected to meet in March in order to complete its work in time for presentation at the 1986 annual meeting.

The petition claims SBC President Charles F. Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, made "erroneous rulings" which "violated the rights" of the plaintiffs and "deprived" them "of the opportunity . . . to vote" on matters related to election of the Committee on Boards.

"The actions of Dr. Stanley violated the integrity of the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention, were in excess of his authority as the presiding officer . . . and deprived the plaintiffs and other messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention of the protection of fair and unbiased procedures which is guaranteed by the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention," the petition says.

The cause of action stems from events at the Dallas convention June

12, in which the SBC Committee on Committees nominated the 52-member Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees.

An attempt was made to amend the Committee on Committee's report. Stanley ruled the report could not be amended by an alternate slate, but only one-by-one. Messengers rejected Stanley's ruling. Subsequently, on the advice of parliamentarian Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarcrest Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., Stanley ruled the report could not be amended at all.

The Crowders' petition says: "Following this erroneous ruling, Dr. Stanley refused to allow the . . . motion to be voted on . . . and refused to recognize any calls for a point of order from numerous messengers who attempted to appeal his ruling . . ."

"Plaintiffs were present on the floor of the convention . . . and attempted unsuccessfully to be recognized for the purpose of appealing (the) ruling by a point of order . . ."

The petition claims the nomination of the Committee on Boards "was not lawfully adopted" and members "were not lawfully elected and are without authority to serve in that capacity."

The suit also claims there is "every likelihood that Dr. Stanley and the defendants will violate the rights of the plaintiffs and other messengers" at the 1986 annual meeting of the convention in Atlanta.

The suit seeks the court to declare: —Bylaw 16 "permits any registered messenger to propose amendments to the report of the Committee on Committees from the floor . . . to nominate any individual or a slate of individuals and have the amendment voted on . . ."

—Bylaw 32 "reserves to the convention the right to amend the body of any report . . ."

—Bylaw 35 "requires that all propositions, decisions and choices, including appeals on points or questions of order or any other challenges to parliamentary rulings, shall be decided by a majority vote of the registered

messengers present and voting . . . and that the chair is bound by and required to obey the decisions of a majority of the messengers . . ."

—the actions of Stanley in the controversial rulings and proceedings "were and are invalid . . ."

—the election of members of the Committee on Boards "was illegal and further declaring that members purportedly elected . . . are without authority to serve in that capacity."

The suit seeks to permanently enjoin "the defendants (and their respective officers, Executive Committee members, employees or agents) from violating the declaratory judgments" or "permitting the members of the Committee on Boards . . . who were illegally elected at the Dallas Convention to continue to serve."

The Crowders and Cooper also seek to "recover . . . their costs, attorneys' fees and related expenses in bringing this suit."

According to a spokesperson in the U.S. District Court Clerk's office in Atlanta, the case has been assigned to Judge Robert H. Hall, 64, who was appointed to the federal bench in 1979. Previously, he was a justice on the Georgia Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Jane F. Vehko, an attorney with the Atlanta law firm of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore, attorneys for the Crowders and Cooper, said the suit names only the SBC and the Executive Committee, and does not specifically name President Stanley or parliamentarian Allen. "We have the two corporate entities named and in a judgment the others would be bound. Naming the individuals was not necessary," she said.

Melvin (Pete) Hill Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Windsor, Mo., described Cooper as an "active member . . . who regularly attends conventions of the SBC and the Missouri Baptist Convention."

Hill, a leader of the moderate forces in Missouri said he is "not involved in the lawsuit in any way," added: "I've tried to play down the Crowder thing. I feel for the Crowders but I don't see it as a win situation. Nobody can win in a lawsuit."

Dan Martin is BP news editor.

Vouchers: "parochial aid" according to Maddox

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A recently unveiled Reagan administration proposal to give disadvantaged students a choice of schools has been attacked by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Americans United Executive Director Robert L. Maddox called the program "a transparent attempt to aid religious schools."

Fall Chautauquas pull in 9,323 senior adults

NASHVILLE — Attendance at ten 1985 fall senior adult Chautauquas was higher than in any of the previous 13 years the conferences have been held, and "the number promise to be even higher for 1986," a senior adult leader said.

Horace Kerr, Baptist Sunday School Board senior adult supervisor in the family ministry department, said a total of 9,323 senior adults attended the 1985 Chautauquas held at Ridgecrest and Glorieta Baptist Conference Centers.

"I really think this was our best year ever," Kerr said. "The response of the senior adults, the feeling of excitement in the general meetings and the unsolicited statements of what the conferences were meaning to them

were better than ever."

Ten Chautauquas, celebrating a theme of "Worthy of His Image," were held Sept. 16-Nov. 1. Four were held at Glorieta, N.M., and six, at Ridgecrest, N.C., Kerr said.

"We had an average weekly attendance of more than 800 at Glorieta and more than 1,000 at Ridgecrest," he said. "That's more than 500 above last year's attendance."

Kerr said he has set an attendance goal of 10,000 for the 1986 Chautauquas, which will have a worship theme of "Coming of Age: Senior Adults and Churches."

Kerr said the purpose of Chautauquas is to "lead churches and senior adults in better working together through ministry."



Lucille Parker (right), retired art instructor at William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., helps Myrtle Lesley, Conway, S.C., during an art class at a senior adult Chautauqua at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. The 10 Chautauquas at Ridgecrest Glorieta drew 9,323 — (Photo by Terri Lackey).

Paul V. Breazeale named endowment fund treasurer

Paul V. Breazeale of Jackson has been selected to serve as the treasurer of The Mississippi Mission—the \$40,000,000 unified endowment campaign of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Breazeale, who is a partner in the accounting firm of Breazeale, Saunders and O'Neil, Ltd., said he accepted the position because he believes in the importance of this campaign to Mississippi College, William Carey College, Blue Mountain College and The Baptist Children's Village.

"Our Baptist institutions serve such a vital role in Christian education," he said. "It is extremely important that we keep them financially sound through good Christian stewardship."

Breazeale is active in First Church,

in Jackson, as a deacon and Sunday School teacher, and he is involved on the Personnel and Stewardship Committees. He is also the treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

In Jackson, he has been active in the United Way and is past president of the Metropolitan YMCA and the Exchange Club. His statewide leadership includes a term as president of the Mississippi Society of PCAs. He has bachelor and MBA degrees from Mississippi State University.

"The size of the campaign and the fact that it will encompass the three colleges and The (Baptist Children's) Village means that we will be keeping very precise records," Breazeale explained. "This will assure that donor preferences will be strictly adhered to."

Federal creche deemed "historically, legally" ok

WASHINGTON (BP) — For the second consecutive year, the federal-sponsored Christmas Pageant of Peace will include a nativity scene.

Despite protests from religious and civil liberties groups, the Pageant of Peace board voted Nov. 25 to include a creche in the display, which will be erected near the White House.

The board based its decision on a 1984 Supreme Court decision that held government sponsorship of nativity scenes to be constitutional, said Sandra Alley, a National Park Service spokesman. The board considers the inclusion of a creche to be "historically and legally appropriate," Alley explained.

Mississippi Youth Evangelism Conference

Monday, December 30

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------|
| 1:00 | Registration Begins | |
| 1:30 | Meeting of Youth Group Leaders/Counselors with Rich Malone in Coliseum Classroom | |
| 2:00 | Special Music — "Redemption" — Gulfport | Carol Mabry, Director |
| 2:10 | Welcome to Mississippi College | Dr. Lewis Nobles |
| 2:15 | Theme Interpretation | Guy Henderson |
| 2:25 | Joe Shelton — "Live" | |
| 2:40 | MESSAGE | Eddie Cooper |
| 3:00 | "Mix and Mingle" (Fast Break) | |
| 3:10 | Group Singing | Bruce Fields |
| 3:30 | MESSAGE | Emory Gadd |
| 4:00 | Dismiss. | |
| 6:30 | Group Singing | Bruce Fields |
| | CONCERT | Kenny Marks |
| | Afterglow | (Celebration time led by |

Tuesday, December 31

- | | | |
|-------|---|---------------|
| 9:00 | Group Singing | Bruce Fields |
| 9:05 | Special Music — "New Generation" — Pontotoc | |
| | David Prevost, Director | |
| 9:15 | MESSAGE | Eddie Cooper |
| 9:45 | Group Fun Time | Rich Malone |
| 9:55 | Joe Shelton — "Live" | |
| 10:15 | "Stand and Stretch" (Fast Break) | |
| 10:30 | MESSAGE | Emory Gadd |
| 11:15 | Dismiss. | |
| 1:30 | Special Music — "The Third Day" — Quitman | |
| | wayne Baggett, Director | |
| 1:40 | Special Feature — "Aggie Mae" | Sylvia Harney |
| 2:30 | "Walk and Talk" (Fast Break) | |
| 2:45 | MESSAGE | Emory Gadd |
| 3:30 | Homeward Bound! | |

People nowadays give up too easily. They'll donate a dollar to an anonymous recipient of any given charity, but won't give two words to an offended neighbor—the two most important words of successfully living side-by-side—I'm sorry.

You don't throw away the patient

because the bandage needs changing. You try again, again, and again for some common ground of understanding. Otherwise, how will we, as a society, ever be able to love our neighbors across the world until we've first learned to love those across the street?—Gloria Pitzer



Voices from the past

William Carey College's Seventh Annual Madrigal Dinner was presented by the Winters School of Music, Dec. 5-7. Some of this year's performers include (left to right): Ken Fujisawa, Toki City, Japan; Sarah Odom, Sumrall; Ron McCall, Seminary; and Xiao-ping Su, Nanjing, China.

November gifts total \$1,253,500

November receipts from Mississippi Baptist churches for Southern Baptist causes through the Cooperative Program totaled \$1,253,500, according to Earl Kelly, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

The Convention Board disburses the receipts to the various budgeted causes according to the schedule passed by the Mississippi Baptist Convention each year.

A total of 36 percent goes to Southern Baptist causes outside the state, the rest to Mississippi education and missions causes.

The 1985 budget is \$17,500,000. Total income for the first 11 months of the year was \$15,603,706. The pro rata budget would call for an income of \$16,041,667 for January through November in order for the total budget to be reached with equal monthly income. That pro rata budget is \$437,961 behind. In order to make the 1985 Cooperative Program budget, Mississippi Baptists would give \$1,458,333 in December.

November giving for 1985 is \$44,739 below that of November of 1984.

Son of Marjorie Rowden Kelly dies in Georgia

Richard Wayne Rowden, 28, son of Marjorie Rowden (Mrs. Earl) Kelly, died in an automobile accident in Georgia, Dec. 7.

Rowden, a member of First Church, Hattiesburg, was assistant district attorney in Hinesville, Ga., and lived in Richmond Hill, Ga.

A graduate of Emory University and Mercer University School of Law, Rowden is survived by a daughter, Allison Whitney, 18 months, his mother of Jackson; and three sisters: Mrs. Rebecca Phillips and Paige Rowden, both of Nashville, and Mrs. Robin Riggs of Athens, Ga.

Burial will be in Atlanta at Westview Cemetery, with a memorial service set Dec. 15 at First Church, Hattiesburg.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be sent through the Foreign Mission Board for the Paul Rowden School in Nazareth. Richard Rowden's parents were missionaries to Israel. The school is named after his deceased father.

Notice to church treasurers

The 1985 books of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board will close with the mail received in our office December 31, 1985. Any gifts to be counted for 1985 must be mailed in order to reach us by that time.

Off the Record

The campaign was over, and on the eve of Election Day the opponents shook hands. The challenger sighed. "You ran a terrific campaign," he told the incumbent. "I'd be happy to win by even one vote."

Two days later he had won by a landslide and received a telegram from his rival: "What will you do with all that extra happiness?"



Executive Committee officers

New officers of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee include, from left, Larry Otis, secretary, layman from Tupelo; Bartis Harper, chairman, pastor of Tylertown Church, Tylertown; and James Lewis, vice chairman, pastor of Academy Church, Blue Mountain.

BWA building dedicated

WASHINGTON (BP) — Baptist World Alliance President G. Noel Vose asked those attending the Nov. 24 dedication of the organization's new building to think of the facility "not as a clerical clearing house dispensing an interminable ticker-tape of memos and letters, but as a place where a group of international Christians exercise a deeply biblical prophetic role in the world convulsed with the agony of its self-inflicted wounds." Vose is principle of Baptist Theological College of Western Australia, Bentley.

Following an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony at the BWA building, located in McLean, Va., participants — including representatives from Yugoslavia, Romania, Nigeria, Australia, Mexico and Canada — moved to McLean Baptist Church for the dedication ceremony.

The BWA formerly occupied a building jointly owned with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. Expansion of BWA ministries necessitated additional space.

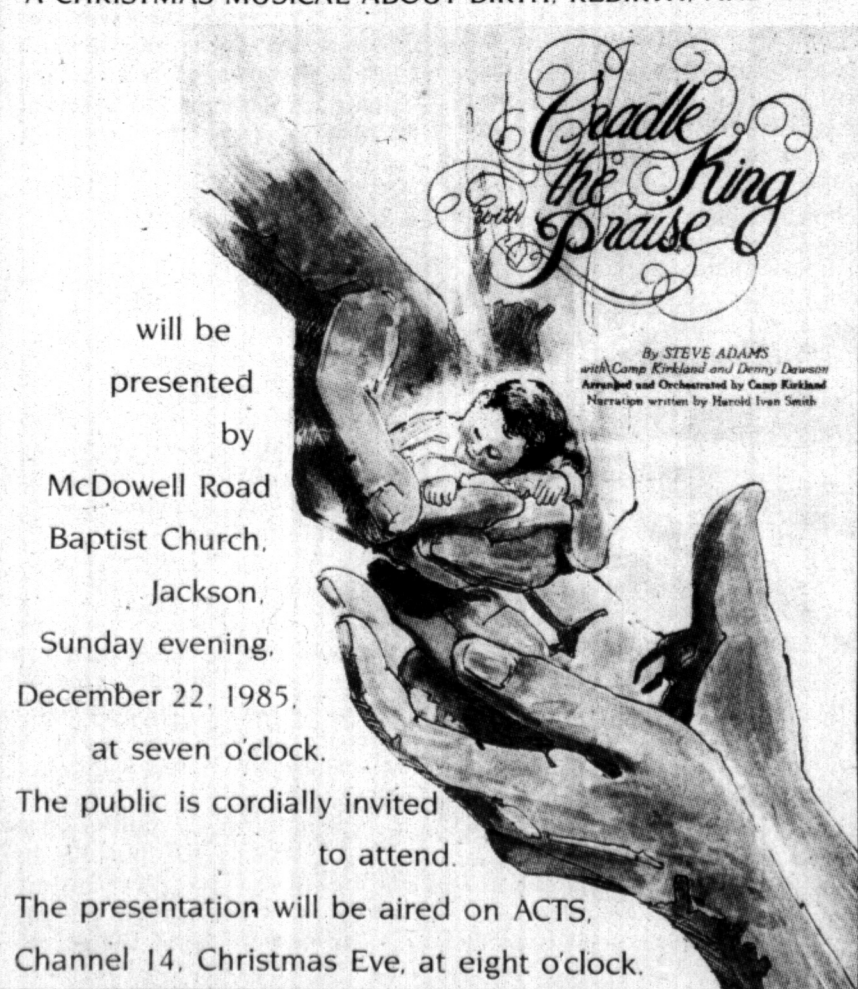
15 - Passenger Church Vans

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A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL ABOUT BIRTH, REBIRTH, AND LIFE



Lindsay reports Rogers selected as candidate

By Greg Warner

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Adrian Rogers, whose election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979 signaled the beginning of a seven-year struggle between conservatives and moderates to control the SBC power structure, apparently again will be the candidate of conservatives when the two sides square off in Atlanta in June.

Although Rogers has not declared formally his candidacy, the Memphis, Tenn., pastor reportedly is allowing his name to be used in a campaign to enlist thousands of messengers to the upcoming Southern Baptist Convention. His intention to run was announced in a Dec. 6 meeting of about 200 conservatives at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville.

"Our candidate will be Adrian Rogers," Homer Lindsay Jr., co-pastor of the church, told the group of pastors and leaders. "He has given us the right to use his name. He is seriously praying and seeking God's face. As far as we know he will be the man to represent us in Atlanta."

Lindsay said he met in Atlanta Dec. 2 with 18 other conservative leaders who decided on Rogers' candidacy. Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, apparently took part in the meeting, although Lindsay said he was not "at liberty" to name the participants.

Since Rogers' election in 1979, the conservatives have controlled the presidency and its appointive powers. In June of this year the conservative candidate, incumbent Charles Stanley of Atlanta, defeated a challenge from moderate Winfred Moore of Amarillo, Texas, in what is considered the closest and hardest-fought election of any incumbent. Stanley, who is completing his second term, is ineligible to run in 1986, but Moore is expected to be a candidate again.

Lindsay said conservatives already are organizing in support of Rogers in many states, naming Alabama, Arkansas and North Carolina. Lindsay is chairman of the steering committee in Florida, he said, adding, "Our goal is to have 5,000 messengers go to Atlanta from Florida."

Lindsay said the Florida effort began with a recent meeting of 150 conservatives in Orlando, Fla. He and the other 21 members of the Florida steering committee who divided the state into an equal number of districts, will hold meetings similar to the one in Jacksonville, which was by invitation only.

Lindsay said he invited selected pastors from six Baptist associations in northeast Florida, as well as a few pastors from southern Georgia. He said other pastors whom "I felt would be uncomfortable" were not invited.

Another member of the Florida steering committee, Harold Hunter, pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church, told the pastors how to prepare for the Atlanta convention in order to guarantee each of their churches has 10 messengers committed to the conservative candidate.

"I don't want anyone going from my church that I have questions about. If

they're going to go, they're going to have to vote like I vote, he said, adding, "some of them may not be certain 'what it is to be led by the Spirit of God, but I'm certain. On this issue there is no doubt.'"

Lindsay echoed that certainty. "I'm not telling you how to vote," he said, "but if you do what God wants you to do, then we'll vote the same way. He's not going to lead you to do one thing and me another."

Hunter urged the pastors to return to their churches and make a public commitment to the conservative effort. "Go public with it and be as political as you need to be," he said.

"Liberals are mean as snakes," Hunter warned. "Anybody who'd deny the Word of God doesn't even know God. If Jesus were standing here today, he would tell you his word is inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired, plenary, the Word of God. I am absolutely convinced of that."

Jerry Vines, who shares the pulpit of First Baptist with Lindsay and is on the SBC Peace Committee, recounted the now familiar charges of liberalism in the denomination. A 50-page paper allegedly documenting liberal beliefs among college and seminary professors and employees of the denomination was distributed at the meeting.

"There is theological departure from the faith to the point that if it not faced and dealt with in the denomination we will face the demise of the greatest evangelistic force on the earth," Vines charged.

In addition to the theological differences, Vines said the SBC faces problems of political maneuvering, denominational insensitivity, ethical inconsistency and a loss of spiritual commitment.

"I grew up in the 50's," Vines said. "Those were red-hot days of winning people to Christ. I believe we are going to have revival when we get back there to living Jesus and loving the lost."

Kittiwake sale completed

The Kittiwake Camp property has been sold, with receipt of the final full payment of the balance owed the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, according to Jennings Orr, business manager of the convention board.

A total of \$200,000 was received from Tennax, Inc., for the last 11 acres of Gulf Coast property which was formerly the Royal Ambassador camp until destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Full sale price was \$260,000. Two acres had been sold to be used by Kittiwake Baptist Church, and two other tracts were sold near to Highway 90.

The building of a multi-purpose lodge at Central Hills Baptist Retreat near Kosciusko was advanced monies from the convention board. The sale of Kittiwake will repay the general funds.

"I grew up in the 30's and 40's," Lindsay said. "You could go into any Southern Baptist church and there wasn't a liberal anywhere, but there are now. The schools are cranking them out."

"This isn't the SBC I grew up in," Hunter said.

After his address, Vines said he saw no inconsistency in a member of the Peace Committee addressing a clearly partisan meeting. "The committee agreed no one would be muzzled," he said, adding moderate members of the committee also are speaking out.

Vines said he was "cautiously optimistic" and the work of the committee. "The difficulty is in pinning down those who hold neo-orthodox (theological) positions," he said. "They use our vocabulary, but not our dictionary."

Greg Warner is associate editor of the Florida Baptist Witness.

Winston planning revival preparation

Winston County Baptists are planning two revival preparation events in advance of the Good News America Revivals, inviting Baptist groups from their area to attend.

The first meeting will be Jan. 9-11 for preachers and lay persons on the topic of "Spiritual Awakening." Guy Henderson, evangelism director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board will direct the meeting which will take place at First Church, Louisville.

The second meeting will be Feb. 7-8 at South Louisville Church. The topic will be "Growing an Evangelistic Church," led by Bob Campbell.

The Good News America Revivals are scheduled across the country by Southern Baptist churches during the month of April.

Jerry Stevens is director of missions for Winston County. For further information concerning these Winston County events, contact him at Box 375 Louisville, Miss., 39339, phone 773-3366.

Lifestyle missions will be topic at student conference

Missions as a lifestyle will be the focus for the 1986 Student Missions Conference scheduled Feb. 28-March 1 at New Orleans Seminary.

Principal speakers for the conference include R. T. and Frank Buckley, who served as missionaries to Bangladesh. Music will be provided by Chris and Diane Machen of Dallas. Mark McMasters, a mime, will perform and lead a seminar in clowning and mime.

Registration fee for the conference is \$12 and includes housing and meals from Friday evening through Sunday breakfast. For complete information about the 1986 Student Missions Conference, contact Waylon Bailey by writing or calling him at New Orleans Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA. 70126-4858, (504) 282-4455.



Church Music Conference planners

Planning has begun for the Annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference which will take place March 6, 1986. Planners include (from left) Dan Hall, director of the MBCB Church Music Department; Nell Adams, president of the conference and faculty member at Clarke College; Leon Bedsole, vice president and minister of music at First Church, Biloxi; and Chris Jenkins, secretary-treasurer and minister of music at First Church, Gautier. The 1986 meeting will take place at First Church, Natchez with William J. Reynolds of Southwestern Seminary as principal speaker. The meeting includes mini-concerts by college choirs and the Singing Churchmen. For reservations, write Jenkins at Box 37, Gautier, Miss., 39553.

"Five-talent" workshop planned for Dec. 27

A five-talent workshop will be taught Dec. 27 at Calvary Church near Petal, 9 to 12 a.m. and 1 to 5 p.m.

The workshop's purpose is to show how to teach via visuals. Program personalities are the following:

CLOWNING . . . by Sharbour Smith who starred on the Captain Hook TV series; CHALK ART . . . by Charlene Nicholas, teacher of art at William Carey College; Magic Illusions . . . by Sharbour Smith, and Al Fairchild, who have worked with TV and motion pictures, and taught numerous work shops; PUPPETS . . . by several puppet teams who have travelled, performing at fairs, etc.; VENTRILOQUISM . . . by Sally Smith, a former beauty queen, and Miss Massachusetts.

There is no registration fee.

An evening performance of talent will be presented from 7 to 9. The public is invited. For information call, Molly Fairchild, of the Fairchild Evangelistic Association, at 544-4420.

Calvary, Tupelo to lead "Maximum Manhood" meeting

Calvary Church, Tupelo, is sponsoring a "Maximum Manhood" Conference Jan. 17-18.

Billed as "a man's conference," the program will be led by Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala., and John West, a former track coach. Alan Celoria, a native of Smithdale, Miss., will be music leader.

General session topics vary on the theme of "A Man and his . . ."; Master, Family, Country, and Career.

Seminars include "How to be the Husband of a Happy Wife," "Witnessing as a Businessman," and "Rock Music and the Teenager."

The registration fee is \$20 per person. For more information, write Calvary Church at Box 1008, Tupelo, Miss., 38801, or phone 842-3338. John Armistead is pastor.

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Clowning around is serious business for Horn Lake troupe

By Tim Nicholas

Sometimes, a group of First Church, Horn Lake, members dress funny and wear too much makeup and trip over things and generally act like a bunch of clowns.

But they do it on purpose. The north Mississippi church has an active clown troupe which offers a Christian ministry to nursing homes and to church groups.

Their sketches include tomfoolery, but they also include direct messages concerning the new life to be found in Christ. One pantomime depicts faceless people discovering the Bible and its truths. As each makes the discovery, his or her mask falls away to show a happy face; and one directs another to the Bible.

Another sketch exaggerates, the way clowns do, the difficulty of picking out the mote in a brother's eye when one has a beam in his own eye. That beam could knock a fellow down.

Spokesmen for the clowns are Jingles (Gary Coad, an air traffic specialist for the FAA) and Bwana (Steve Ketchum, maintenance supervisor at the church). Jingles is the lead clown, and Bwana remains in "civilian" clothes to help translate the clowning to people.

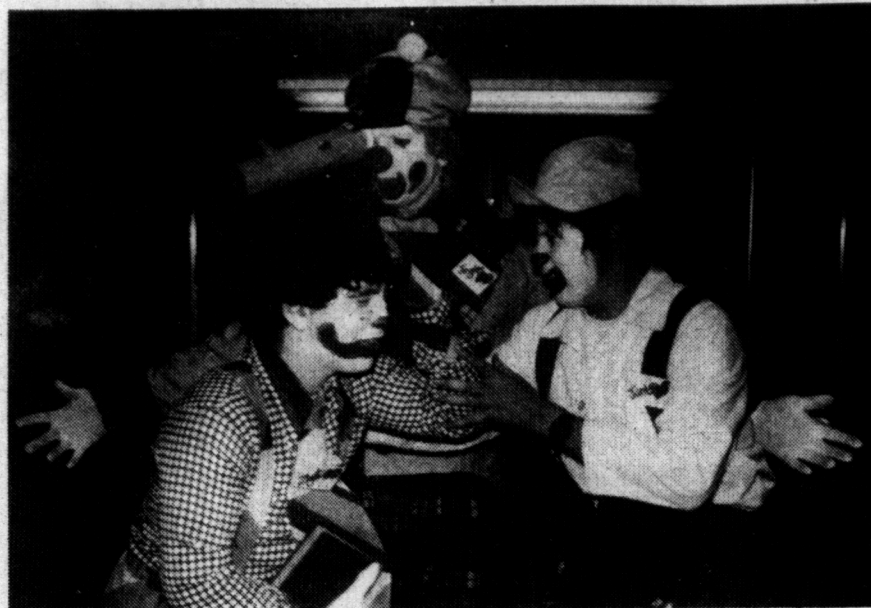
"You've got to care about other people," says Jingles, who has been in clowning for several years, including a mission trip to Brazil as Jingles. "The kids got really depressed the first time they went to a nursing

home," he said. "Your heart may be breaking . . . but you have to be joyous as a clown."

Zigit, 19-year old Andrew Walthall, says, "You have to know how to control your feelings." Adds Jingles, paraphrasing Scripture, "You truly become a new creature," when in clown makeup.

Jingles tells of visiting a woman last year who was battling cancer. He'd lost his brother to the disease years ago and the visit was going to be difficult for him. "I didn't think I could do it," he recalled. But the woman over the phone said she'd be glad to see him. "Jingles handled it where I couldn't handle it," he said.

The woman opened up to Jingles,



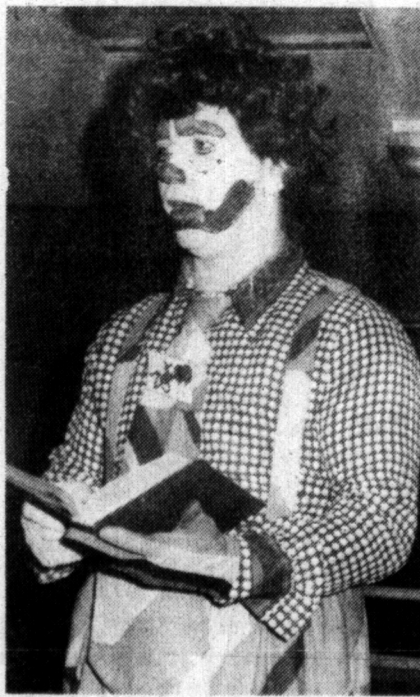
That beam in his eye could knock a fellow down.



Getting into makeup takes patience and time.



Paula Thornton, a helper of clowns, hands a hanky to a member as Bubba (Doug Thomasson) gets into costume.



Zigit reads from the Scripture during a sketch.



A "faceless one" is about to discover the new life in Christ during a sketch.



The clown troupes of First Church, Horn Lake, includes, from left, Zigit (Andrew Walthall); Junior (Mike Mullins); Checkers (Arthur Lewis); Jingles (Gary Coad); Twinkle (Sonya Mullins); Crickette (Christina Depew); and not pictured are Bubba (Doug Thomasson); and Bwana (Steve Ketchum).

shared her conversion experience and said she felt the Lord would give her strength when she needed it. "It was one of the most moving times I've ever had," said Jingles. Later, other women told Gary the woman would talk often about his visit.

Bwana says that in the hospitals Jingles has a hard time leaving. "Could you come down and talk to my wife?" people will ask. "Strange as he looks, they'll open up to him," says Bwana. One woman had lost the will to live, they were told, wouldn't even eat. "Jingles fed her himself—got her to laugh," says Bwana. Another man was sullen, on his side, facing the wall. "Hey, bro," shouted Jingles. The black man turned over, started laughing and talking.

If the clowns can get people into a relaxed atmosphere, "We get their confidence first and start expressing God's love in a more tangible way," says Jingles. "It opens up avenues a lot faster."

Checkers, otherwise known as Arthur Lewis, 20, has a grandmother in a nursing home, and he goes in costume to cheer her up. "Basically, I'm a cheerful person and I like others cheerful," he says.

Jingles has attended a number of clowning conferences offered by the Sunday School Board and passes his learning to the others in the group which range in age down to Twinkle, the newest member, Sonya Mullins, age 12.

The group is planning a summer clowning tour and taking assignments from church groups. They've performed at the RA and GA camps at the associational camp at Eudora and performed at a recent associational youth night. The church phone number is 393-7620.

"Clowning is giving of yourself and expecting nothing in return," says Jingles. Adds Bwana, "Clowning is hard work."

Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

Marcos Gomes and the Bible School of the Air

Sometimes I wear a small pin that shows an open Bible, a radio tower, and the words, *Escola Biblica do Ar*. It was given to me by David Gomes, director of the Brazilian radio program which has chosen as its scripture Romans 10:17 — "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

The Bible School of the Air was begun in 1949 as a five-minute radio program of Bible questions and answers. It was started by David Gomes and the Tijuca Baptist Church of Rio de Janeiro, where he was then pastor. One church member said, "Our program is like a Sunday School." So they called it the Bible School of the Air.

This radio program and its outreach grew. It went on shortwave to reach all of Brazil, and then onto international networks, to reach Portuguese-speaking people in many countries.

In 1953, the program was registered as a legal entity; a Bible school board was elected, made up of Brazilian Baptist pastors and laymen. That same year, on March 3, a son, Marcos David, was born to David Gomes and his wife, Haydee. (David, besides being director of the Bible School of the Air, is also pastor of the Church of Hope in downtown Rio; and author; a preacher in many evangelistic crusades; and Baptist seminary professor.)

Marcos David is 33 now. A few weeks ago, he and his father were in Jackson for a half day. Mama and I met them at the airport. They came with us to the Baptist Building for an hour or so, went to visit Rosalee Mills Appleby in Canton, and then Mr. Owen Cooper took them on to Yazoo City, where David was to speak at First Baptist Church that night.

This was Marcos' first trip to the United States. An engineer and a graduate of a university in Rio, he last year decided to leave his position with a large construction company and to become administrator of the Bible School of the Air. "Why?" I asked him.

"I was impressed as I looked at the Bible School," he told me. "I saw the great scope of its ministries, and I realized I wanted to help make this work continue. I realized that my dad had given almost his whole life to this cause. In order that it might continue after his death, I wanted to work side by side with him, to feel the weight and the possibilities of it. At the same time, I would be learning about how it is run. Entering into the planning has enlarged my vision of it."

The Bible School of the Air headquarters is in the Building of Faith in Rio. (The unusual story of this building is told in my book, *When Faith Triumphs*.) Its many radio programs are aired across Brazil; through HCJB of Quito, Ecuador; and on Transworld Radio from Bonaire. It still offers Bible correspondence courses at no charge. Also it offers

counseling sessions at no charge; a 24-hour "Phone of Love" prayer line; a Christian publication service (books, tracts, tapes, records); an encampment program; evangelism crusades; and legal and medical assistance for needy people. It helps to start mission points and new churches.

The Bible School of the Air holds noonday worship services daily for office workers and others in the downtown area (The Church of Hope is also located in the Building of Faith.)

Marcos Gomes for ten years worked as an engineer, in the designing and construction of large building complexes. In his first assignment, building 72 buildings with three floors each, he was responsible for overseeing the work of 700 men. Then from 1973 until 1982, as the company branched out into North Mato Grosso and South Mato Grosso, Parana, he was over 2,000 men.

I asked him if he were sorry he had left, to work with the Bible School of the Air. "No," he emphasized. "I did feel pride in building physical buildings, but now I see great joy in the spiritual building I see going up."

He added, "It is much easier to build big buildings, from the grass roots, from bottom to top, than it is to build the Bible School, from the top down (depending on God for the building.) It is impossible to build an edifice from the top down. It is impossible to build the Bible School from the bottom up!"

"Daily," he said, "I see so many people coming to God through Jesus." Hundreds over the years have made professions of faith as a result of listening to these radio programs, and have written in to tell about their experience of salvation. One woman wrote that 19 in her family had become Christians as a result of listening to the Bible School of the Air, and from the nucleus a church had been formed.

"We hope by the year 2,000 to discover many new areas into which we can penetrate with the gospel message by radio, and also with television."

Besides his duties as administrator, Marcos is partner in an engineering firm which helps churches with their building construction. In this way, he can continue to use his engineering talent, as architectural and engineering consultant. This company has an office in the Building of Love, a Bible School property next door to the Building of Faith.

"My family gives me help and understanding," he said. His lovely wife, Deise, is a medical doctor. When I met her in 1978, she was also pianist for the Church of Hope. They have a son, Felipe, 3, and a daughter, Glaucia, 6.

The Bible School of the Air has never had any advertising sponsors. In the beginning, David told the owner



Marcos Gomes, left, and his father, David Gomes, recently visited in the Baptist Building. Marcos is administrator of the Bible School of the Air in Brazil and David is the director.

of one radio station that the sponsor is God. He still maintains that. Offerings received through the mail from listeners have met the expenses from day to day through 36 years.

In the brochure left on my desk, I read that the Bible School of the Air needs "an Ampex recorder used or new, a TV filming machine, a cassette copier or two, and wheel tapes." For

information on this ministry contact Priority One International, Inc., at Park Centre, Suite 160, Plano, Tex. 75074.

"Daily I feel the blessing of God," Marcos declared. "Daily, as our work grows, I realize it is because more people are binding us in prayer."

1986 SBC Book of Reports preorder deadline March 15

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Messengers to the 1986 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta June 10-12 who want to insure they have a copy of the 1986 Book of Reports must order them prior to March 15.

This is the first time orders have been taken and is in response to the record registration at the 1985 meeting in Dallas which caused numerous messengers to do without the reports when the supply ran out.

Books may be ordered by filling out the attached coupon and mailing it, along with a check payable to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention for \$3.50 for each book to:

BOOK OF REPORTS
901 Commerce Street, Suite 750
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A receipt will be sent to those ordering which can be used to secure a copy of the reports in the registration area at the Atlanta convention site, according to an Executive Committee spokesman. Individuals who order and are then unable to attend the convention may return their receipt to the above address and a copy of the book will be mailed to them immediately following the convention.

Due to publishing deadlines no copies can be mailed prior to the convention.

A limited number of copies of the Book of Reports will be available to those who do not preorder. These will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis for \$4 each at the registration desk.

It is requested that a separate form be used for each book ordered.



Education Commission officers

New officers of the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission include Eddie M. Smith, left, vice chairman, president of East Central Junior College, Decatur; John G. Brock, right, chairman, pastor of Ackerman Church, Ackerman; and not pictured, Robert Upchurch, secretary, a Tupelo layman.

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First Church, Aberdeen held its Acteens and GAs recognition ceremony, Nov. 17. Girls in Action receiving Missions Adventures Badges were (top photo) Shane Hawkins, Deanna Roberts, April Owen, Shannon and Kim Roebuck, Corey Patterson, Le Sonya Carson, Melanie Andrews, Janice Gosa, Jamie Ray, Whitney Irvin and Nicole Roberts.

(Bottom photo) Jennifer Roberts and Joylin Davis were recognized for their completion of the Queen level in Studiact. Their crown bearers were Deanna Roberts and Rachel Wright.



Just for the Record

New Pleasantdale Church, Philadelphia, has called E. C. Tucker as pastor. He is now on the field.

LaVerne Summerlin recently moved to Cooperville Church, Morton, as pastor. He served New Zion in Morton for the past five years. He is a graduate of Clarke College, Blue Mountain College and New Orleans Seminary.

Tommy Clark has been called as pastor of North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton. Clark is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary and was former pastor of Charjean Church, Memphis, Tenn. He and his wife, Marilynn, have four children, Chris, Paul, Betsy, and Adam.



Gandy Busby is the leader. Tom Miller is pastor.

Acteens of Southside Church, Lucedale, held a recognition service. The theme of the service was "By Love Compelled." Tonya Gandy completed the Queen level. Pat Busby is the leader. Tom Miller is pastor.

Luke Henry was honored on his 90th birthday at Antioch Church, Bruce, with friends and relatives.

Henry has been a deacon of Antioch Church since 1932. He has three sons, James, Mallon, and Ralph, also deacons. All of his grandsons and grandsons-in-law are also deacons.

Chickasaw Association held its "M" Night Nov. 25, at Woodland Church, Woodland. Woodland Church received the percentage banner. Arbor Grove received the attendance banner, with a total of 163 in attendance. Danny Holland is pastor of Woodland Church. Foy Rogers is director of missions.

BETHANY, Okla. (BP)—Joe L. Ingram, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since 1971, will step aside June 30, 1986 to become fulltime president of the Baptist Health Care Corporation. Ingram, who will be 66 in January, already is president of the Health Care Corporation which operates nine hospitals and four retirement villages.

Macklyn Hubbell, associate professor of psychology and counseling at New Orleans Seminary, will be leading a Family Life Conference, Dec. 13-15, at Cambridge Church, Gautier (Jackson Association).

The theme for the conference will be "Making Good Families Better." Among the topics to be discussed are: family communication, listening, parenting, and how to change. Bob Williams is pastor.

Bel Aire Church, Gulf Coast Association, celebrated its 20th anniversary, Oct. 20. The theme was "Looking Back—Launching Forth." Former pastors and ministers of music were worship leaders during the services. The church history, historical data, pictures and slides were on display. An updated copy of the church history was presented by the history committee. The noon meal was served "on the ground" under the state evangelism tent.

Marilyn Smith, minister of music, and Charles Rodgers, pastor, concluded the afternoon service by leading the church to "make new memories" for future anniversary celebrations.

The adult choir of Grandview Church, Pearl, will present the Singing Christmas Tree, Dec. 22, at 6 p.m., followed by Christmas dinner at 7 p.m. in fellowship hall. Wade Chappell is pastor.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Jerry M. Self, public affairs and Christian life consultant with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, Tenn., has been named assistant director of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.



Parkway Church, Natchez, recently ordained four new deacons. Pictured, (left to right) are Randy Graves, Greg Davis, Kenny Jackson, and Johnny Jones. Gerald Buckley is pastor.

Missionary News

Mrs. R. T. Buckley Sr., mother of R. T. Buckley, missionary to Bangladesh, died Nov. 14 in Picayune, Miss. He is a native of Picayune. His wife, the former Frances Goynes, was born in Gibson, Miss., but spent much of her childhood in Maringouin, La. Appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1967, they may be addressed at Rt. 2, Box 9, Picayune, Miss. 39466.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy L. McKay, missionaries to the Philippines, report a change of address (Romulo St., Camiling Tarlac, Philippines 2111). A native of Texas, he was born in Levelland and considers Lamesa his hometown. She is the former Marcia Parrish of Starkville, Miss. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1983.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael D. Racey, missionaries to Chile, are the parents of Travis, born Oct. 29. They may be addressed at Apartado 100, 2350 San Francisco de Dos Rios, San Jose, Costa Rica. They consider Biloxi, Miss., their hometown. The former Annette Evans, she was born in Mobile, Ala. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1984.

Names in the News

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, has named Jennifer Bryon Owen as products group manager. Carol Kelly and Donna Maples, past communications group manager and training design group manager respectively, have been elected to the Tennessee WMU staff.

Owen is the first to hold this new position. She will be responsible for managing the work of the products editors, editorial assistants and artists relating to the WMU administrative magazine Dimension and to products development.

Prior to coming to national headquarters, Owen owned a public relations and marketing firm. For 13 years, she was employed at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., working in the book store division and for Broadman Press.

DALLAS (BP)—Eula Mae Henderson, 70, a Texas Baptist mission leader for more than three decades, died Dec. 5 at her home in Garland, Texas, following a lengthy illness.

Miss Henderson was executive director-treasurer of Texas Woman's Missionary Union from 1947-80 after being young people's secretary for Texas WMU in 1946. Following her retirement, she spent more than two years as a Mission Service Corp volunteer for the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio. The seminary honored her for significant contributions to Hispanics by naming a chapel after her.



Will McRaney, Jr. was licensed to the gospel ministry, Nov. 17, at Parkway Church, Natchez. McRaney is a senior at Mississippi State University. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Will McRaney, Sr. of Natchez, and is married to the former Sandy Vandevender of Pascagoula. Gerald Buckley is pastor.

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NEEDED: Newly formed mission needs VAN. No money but much need. Horseshoe Bend Baptist Mission on Lake of Ozarks. Guy O. Thomas, Rt. 73, Box 395, Lake Ozark, MO 65049.

DISNEY WORLD, EPCOT, January 27-31. \$250 per person double occupancy including lodging, tickets, breakfast. Shows Tours, Box 2554, Laurel, MS 39442 (601) 729-2202; 1-800-826-6849.

Revival Dates

Corinth Church, Heidelberg: revival and watch night services; Dec. 29-Jan. 1; Sun. services, 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Mon., 7 p.m., Hal Taylor, Butler, Ala., preaching; Tues., 7 p.m.-12 p.m., Searchers Quartet, singing; Hal Taylor; Leroy Craven, Laurel; Richard Wallace, Hickory; Tommy Parker, Heidelberg; and Lester Gardner, Sharon, preaching; refreshments served; Wed., 7 p.m., Hal Taylor; Edd Holloman, pastor.

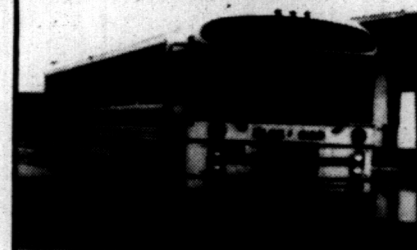
Staff Changes



Gene Neal has recently been called to First Church, Brandon, as minister of youth and activities. He goes from a similar position at First Church, Oxford. Neal and his wife, Linda, have one child, Holly, 3 years old.

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Journalist missionaries selected to begin program

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has selected initial personnel for a new communications plan which will feature firsthand reporting of missions through a system of four professionally trained missionary correspondents assigned to areas around the world.

Robert O'Brien, the board's overseas news coordinator, will direct development and professional operation of the system from Richmond, according to Bob Stanley, news and information services director and chief of the Richmond (foreign) bureau of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Michael Chute, 35, former managing editor of the Missouri Baptist newsjournal, *Word and Way*, and Craig Bird, 36, Baptist Press feature editor at the home office in Nashville, Tenn., are expected to work with O'Brien as the first two overseas correspondents.

The board's human resources subcommittee approved Bird and his wife, Melissa, Nov. 19 to be recommended for missionary appointment next April, pending completion of seminary study required of missionaries. Bird will leave Baptist Press Dec. 31 to enroll at Southwestern Seminary.

Chute, who accepted the new post in October, will begin partial duties immediately. He and his wife, Kathie, a Mississippian, will return to the United States next August for furlough from Brazil, where they have been assigned as missionaries since September 1982. He has been news and information coordinator for the South Brazil Mission in Rio de Janeiro.

The Chutes and the Birds will have several months of orientation at the board in Richmond before moving fully into their areawide assignments. Chute will report on missions in Latin America, working out of Brasilia, Brazil; Bird will report on missions in Africa, from a home base in Nairobi, Kenya.

The overseas correspondents' main function will be to tell the story of missions through a variety of channels to U.S. audiences. They also will work directly with field missionaries to help them improve efforts to communicate the impact of missions.

O'Brien, former Baptist Press news editor in Nashville, joined the Foreign Mission Board staff in 1980 to field test the system. After two years of preparation in Richmond, Robert and Shirley Bradley O'Brien and their sons, Eric and Paul, moved to Nairobi for two years to conduct a pilot study of the overseas system.

O'Brien, a South Carolinian, earned a B.A. degree in journalism and history from Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va., and masters in journalism and religious education from Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., and Southern Seminary.

Before joining Baptist Press in 1973, O'Brien spent eight years in Baptist journalism and seven in secular journalism. He was press director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and an associate magazine editor for the Baptist Brotherhood Commission. Earlier he worked as a reporter and editor on newspapers in Virginia. He has been a visiting professor twice at Southern seminary.

Chute, born in Illinois and reared in Missouri, has a B.A. degree in journalism from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. He has a masters in communications from Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, and attended Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Besides being *Word and Way* managing editor, Chute has been information specialist at the Baptist Sunday School Board, director of public relations at Southwest Baptist University, and public relations consultant at Midwestern seminary.

Bird was born in Arkansas and reared in Texas. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. He also did 36 semester hours of graduate study at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas and Tennessee State

University, Nashville.

Before joining Baptist Press in 1982, Bird was director of news and information at Hardin-Simmons University, director of communications and houseparent at the South Texas Children's Home, and reporter and editor on newspapers in Oklahoma and Texas.

Besides church and home responsibilities as missionaries, Katherine Benge Chute and Melissa Jackson Bird expect to assist their husbands in their professional responsibilities.

Mrs. Chute, a Mississippian, is a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and earned a masters in communication from Southwest Missouri State University. A former editorial assistant for Baptist Press, she also has been an advertising copy writer, communications director, and public relations consultant.

Mrs. Bird, a Texan, is a graduate of San Jacinto College, Pasadena, Texas, and has been a teacher, houseparent, secretary, press room assistant and printing firm sales representative.

The Chutes have two children, Ryan Douglas and Kristen Leigh-Anne, and the Birds have two children, Coby Alan and Brant Michael.

Devotional

Bethlehem of Judea

By Don Nerren

Matthew 2:1 and Luke 2:7 tells us that Jesus our wonderful Lord was born in Bethlehem. Here 4,000 years back, Jacob buried his beloved Rachel. Here was the home of Naomi and where she met her kinsman, Boaz, the great-grandson of David. Here Samuel anointed David to be the king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:13).



Nerren

Today the Church of the Nativity is a sacred grotto. The roof of the Nativity was marred by Constantine, where he pierced a hole in the cave so that he could look down into the place where many say our Lord was born. Thus, he erected an altar over the place which is still there.

This sacred grotto is a basilica filled with mosaic pediment and many lighted candles cared for by the Armenians, the Greek Orthodox, and the Latins.

As I approached this holy place last Christmas, I did it with great awe and reverence. I did not notice so much the beautiful mosaics or the silver star that marks the birthplace of our Lord Jesus.

With my heart beating out of my chest, on my knees I peered down into the cave and saw the spot where many believe our blessed Lord Jesus was born in the long ago, I saw only "the place" where my God stepped into human history long ago as a real man.

The experience spoke volumes to my heart and I knew afresh that Jesus was alive. I bowed my head in great humility and thanked our dear God for loving us so much that he would give up his only Son to be born of a virgin woman; and thus, he began a short journey that would take him to the cross of Calvary where he would die for the sins of the world.

Jesus, the Son of the living God, the second person of the great mysterious Trinity, is alive. He's alive!

With no fantastic fan-fare, only a single star, a few shepherds and an angel choir, our Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Born, all man and yet all God, to live and die so all could live forever. He alone is the Christ of Christmas Day. He is the Jesus, ever living and interceding in 1985. He will be the same tomorrow.

Nerren is pastor, Center Hill Baptist Church, Hamilton.

Lost hope is the undertaker's best friend.

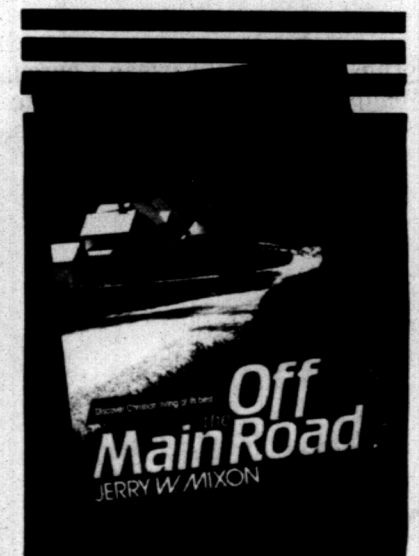


Amory GAs and Acteens

GAs and Acteens of Meadowood Church, Amory, held their recognition service, Nov. 3. The theme was "My Promise To God." The service was dedicated to Mrs. Evelyn Randle, "for her love of missions." GAs participating in the service were (top photo) first row, l to r, Rebeceah Duke, Amber Rowland, Michelle Gates, Cherish Jernigan, Brandi White, Emily Coker, Jennifer Rodabough, Kim Wade, Tracy Duke, Bridgette Langford. Second row, l to r, Samantha Morgan, Branna Coker, Misti Walls, Kristi Barrett, Jennifer Harlow, Lori Pearson, Elizabeth Hover. Third row, l to r, Marlane Rodabough, Christy Jackson, Alysha Pace, Gigi Pearson, Emily Best, and Shae

Owen. GA directors and leaders are Harriet Coker, Gloria Coker, and Donna Wardlaw.

Acteens participating were (bottom photo) first row, l to r, Christy Cox, Jamie Adams, Brian Logan (escort), Candi Hover, Tina Stanford, Johnny Cole (escort), Candi Walls, Yvonna Orrell. Second row, l to r, Melissa Cox, Tommy Key (escort), Angie Logan, Mary Hover, Masha Key, Brian Jernigan (escort), Steve Gallop (escort), Anissa Peden, Tina Key, Lane Wade (escort), Susan Reeves, Angela Stanford, Lana Mason. Directors are Mrs. Joni Gates and Mrs. Patti Hawkins. Danny Powell is pastor.



Isn't it time you got "off the main road" of your busy life to recall the treasures of your past?

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Author **Jerry Mixon**, a former evangelist, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Winona, Mississippi.

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Threshold of a new century

(Continued from page 2)

til it was quiet again in the Arctic night, as quiet and peaceful as it must have been when God had finished with the creation of the world, when only birds sang and all the other animals in a multi-voiced choir joined Adam and Eve in guileless and innocent laughter.

But even here in the Polar night there was life. Overhead the stars shone brilliantly and sparkled from an intensely dark firmament; they looked so close and bright as almost to be within touching reach, while the impressive constellation of Ursa Major (The Great Bear) wholly dominated the Northern sky. And somewhere, Bill knew, Nanook, the polar bear, was hibernating; somewhere in the icy wastes he was waiting out the darkness of the Polar winter; and when the first glimmerings of light returned to the Arctic, Nanook would be on the prowl, followed by his little brood. And then the occupants of the listening posts better be careful, for Nanook had been the master of the Arctic for uncounted ages and he suffered no competitors on his hunting grounds. Yes, for Bill Delaney Christmas Eve of this year, 999, promised to be a lonely Christmas Eve; and he realized that just as he must spend this final Christmas of the now rapidly waning 20th century all by himself under the Arctic stars, so he was going to make—a week hence—his entry into the 21st Century on a single ticket without the comforting company of his loved ones. The thought of it all overwhelmed him momentarily. But his sense of duty kept him going; and then again, suddenly, at five minutes before midnight on Christmas Eve 999 A.D., the radio receiver began to beep and this time incessantly.

(To be continued next week.)

John Martens lives in Ontario, Canada.

Highland makes "Chrismon" tree

Highland Church, Jackson, celebrated the beginning of the Christmas season Dec. 1 with a Chrismon service in the evening worship hour. Members of the congregation were invited in advance to make handmade Christmas ornaments, Chrismons.

Chrismon is a word derived from the combination of two words, CHRIST and MONogram, meaning Christ Monogram or a signature for Christ. Members made more than 100 handmade ornaments with a Christian significance and during the service laced with carols, decorated the tree. As the members placed their Chrismon on the tree, they explained its meaning or significance.

The youth choir, young musicians, and music makers sang special carols relating to the tree as part of the service.

Following the service the Young at Heart senior adult group of the church moved the tree to the activities building where it was placed in an area to be used by church groups for Christmas parties and activities during the Christmas season. Cliff Shipp pastor.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record.

The Patterson issue

Editor:

I want to respond to Mr. Sims concerning the dismissal of Dr. Farrar Patterson. I still do not understand the words, fundamental, conservative, and liberal. I have heard these used in anger, frustration, and sometimes whispered as a warning so that one can avoid another. Sometimes these have sounded like "cuss words" used to define one with whom another disagrees.

Our trustees, according to some accounts, consist of fundamentalists, conservatives, and, God forbid, a few liberals. This charge was published when the trustees were divided on the issue of dismissal of Dr. Patterson. The liberals wanted to dismiss him, and the conservatives wanted to keep him. Now these three groups have come together in agreement. That is nothing short of a miracle! Now if we can just determine whether the fundamentalists become liberals or vice-versa, we can decide whether to praise all of them or try to fire all of them.

I believe these men struggled long and hard, discussed each issue with mutual respect for one another, and finally arrived at a painful decision, a process whereby Dr. Patterson could be returned to the classroom. They dealt with issues and not personalities.

Richland plans singing tree for Christmas

A 34-foot Christmas tree will be the platform from which First Church, Richland, will present its annual Christmas music on Dec. 21 and 22 at 7 p.m.

With 105 choir members on the tree, the total weight will be eight tons, according to Simeon Nix, minister of music at the church. The tree is made of steel. Both the youth choir and the adult choir of the church will be on the tree for the presentation. The children's choirs also will participate during a part of the concert.

Decorations for the tree will include 1,500 lights and a garland 350 feet in length. A prismatic, 21-sided star will sit atop the tree, reflecting light as it turns.

The concert will include excerpts from "King of Love," by Rodger Strader, and "Christmas Rhapsody," by Don Wyrzten, along with other solo presentations and Christmas carols.

Accompaniment will be by piano, organ, brass instruments, percussion instruments, and guitar.

This will be the second year for the presentation of a singing Christmas tree at First Church, Richland. Following last year's presentations, there were 104 decisions recorded.

Elsie Berryhill is organist, and Irene Martin is pianist.

Ed McDaniel is pastor.

Letters to the Editor

in this struggle.

Dr. Patterson is to be commended for his convictions. He refused to change those convictions even though it cost him his source of income. But when one becomes a part of a Baptist church or is employed by a Baptist institution, one agrees to abide by the decision of the majority, and this Dr. Patterson refused to do.

There has been prolonged, painful, public exposure of our differences; and no doubt much of this has been either incomplete or distorted. I am firmly convinced that if we give adequate time to those whom we have elected, we will see problems resolved, not in anger, not in witch hunts, but through loving redemptive actions which will glorify God, and help Southern Baptists to grow.

Let us pray for those whom we have chosen to serve in positions of responsibility. Difficult decisions are the rule rather than the exceptions for these people.

Ken Pickens
pastor, Grace Church
Vicksburg

Work in China

Editor:

I just want to drop a note to thank you for your excellent and sensitive coverage of our renewed emphasis on undergirding the work of Christians in China. Your editorial was especially meaningful to me in that it pointed out the fact that our ministry to Chinese is really one piece of fabric, whether they live in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Mississippi. I hope you will keep sounding that note.

Thank you for your statesmanlike journalism and all that you do individually and through The Baptist Record.

Lewis I. Myers, Jr., director
Cooperative Services
International Office of
Overseas Operations

Sunday shopping

Editor:

In recent weeks Mississippians have become involved in "blue laws" or the closing of retail stores on Sundays. Should Sunday be just another day in the work week?

There are Ten Commandments which civilized society must follow if we desire a better life on Planet Earth. These Commandments are spelled out in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:7-21. The fourth commandment states, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Other commandments are: "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," and so forth. Man must respect the logic behind these universal truths which Jehovah God gave Moses on Mount Sinai.

As an individual what can I do to help reverse this eroding or breaking down of basic biblical commandments? With the Sunday "blue laws," simply do NOT shop in retail stores on the sabbath day! Boycott on Sunday the grocery stores and department stores. Do your shopping during the work week. Let the retail clerks attend church on Sundays.

Sunday or the sabbath day should be a day of relaxing from the week's labor of making a living. Sunday should be a non-labor day; it should honor Jehovah God. Enjoy the beauties of nature about you on Sun-

day. Look about you and see God's great sky, mountains, forests, etc. Church attendance and Bible reading on Sunday will enrich your living and give you more zest to live during the following work week. You will probably also increase your longevity of life!

If you agree with the above comments, "talk it up" with your relatives and friends. Let us "stand up and be counted" to keep the sabbath day a holy day for God!

Robert S. Leigh
Jackson

Muslim debate in London

Editor:

I want to call attention to an upcoming debate between Dr. Anis Shorosh, a displaced Palestinian Christian, and Mr. Ahmed Deedat, a proponent of the Islam religion.

Dr. Shorosh is a native of Nazareth. He received his education at Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary and is now a known international evangelist.

Mr. Deedat is an Indian by birth, and now a citizen of South Africa and is an advocate of the Muslim faith.

The subject of the debate is "Is Jesus God?" and it will be held in the 8,000-seat capacity Prince Albert Hall in London, England.

This past summer while Dr. Shorosh was in London he heard Mr. Deedat throw down a challenge. Dr. Shorosh accepted it. Subsequently, the Prince Albert Hall was engaged for the debate. I have received a copy of Today Magazine published in London, England, giving front page coverage to the event, taking place Sunday, Dec. 15.

It is requested that all who know about the event be in prayer for Dr. Shorosh as he faces Mr. Deedat on this Sunday. This debate could conceivably have a marked effect and retardation of the spread of the Muslim faith in this country.

Owen Gregory
Jackson

Pastor in Germany

Editor:

Our church, Ansbach Baptist Church, in Ansbach, West Germany, has been without a pastor since September of this year. A pastor search committee was formed; and we are in the process of seeking an individual who, in accordance with God's will, desires to come to be the spiritual leader of our congregation.

Our church is affiliated with the European Baptist Convention and is founded upon the principles and doctrine of the Southern Baptist Convention. We request your assistance in making our needs known to any individual who feels led to minister to a military community here in Europe. We are a small church with good growth potential, and we are in need of a spiritual leader who is capable of coping with an ever changing congregation due to military commitments. We are fairly financially stable, but we are still a mission of the Nurnberg Baptist Church.

Please disseminate this information as much as possible so we can begin correspondence with anyone interested in coming to Ansbach.

James S. Day
HHC, 1st. Bn. 6th Inf.
APO New York 09140

Open enrollment

Editor:

The open enrollment period in the church insurance plans we administer at the Annuity Board closed November 30, 1985. I thought you might like a report on this extraordinary marketing effort.

It appears that the applications from our Southern Baptist churches across the nation will total 8,000! Originally, we had informally set a minimum goal of 3,000 and a maximum goal of 5,000! The response has been nothing short of phenomenal as thousands of applications for the medical and term life insurance plans have poured into our office.

I thought you might be interested in this report. Let me thank you once again for your assistance in this effort to help our churches.

Darold H. Morgan, president
Southern Baptist Annuity Board

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(Continued)

WORDS OF MEANING

We Like To Hear

CHILDREN

FAMILY

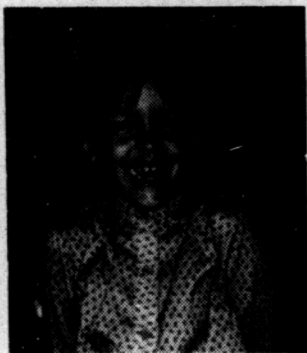
HOME

MISSIONS

CARING

SHARING

GIFTS



WORDS OF MEANING

We Prefer Not To Hear



CHILD ABUSE

FAMILY PROBLEMS

HOME DETERIORATION

DEPRESSION

UNLOVED

SELFISHNESS

NO PROVISION

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Baptist Record

- Life and Work: *Accepting responsibility*
- Uniform: *Good news of great joy*
- Bible Book: *Visions of earthly kingdoms . . .*

Good news of great joy

By Anthony S. Kay

Luke 2:8-20

Have you ever heard anyone say, "Do I have good news for you?" If you are like me, you immediately have a nagging suspicion that someone is about to put something over on you. We tend to view such statements with a critical mind. However, there are appropriate times when we ourselves exclaim, "I have good news!" These very words echoed in the heavens the night of Christ's birth. Imagine what the shepherds must have thought. Were they skeptical, too? If so, they followed through and found the source

of the good news and the fountainhead of joy.

I. Observe the good news. What is the good news? It is the birth of the Savior. With the coming of Christ, God was making a personal appearance. Jesus was and is the best news that sinful man could hear. The shepherds were the first to receive the heavenly announcement, and awe and fear filled their hearts. Surely they must have been overwhelmed by such news. That same good news is as fresh and vibrant today as it was then. We who listen to the spirit of God as he speaks

to our hearts hear the message — a Savior is born.

II. Notice the joy. Good news has an important by-product. In this case, it was great joy. The Christmas season is a time of joy. We see it in the lives of children, youth and adults. When we share good news, loving occasions and happy times, we experience joy. The joy the shepherds felt that first night was the beginning of a great joy that was to find its fulfillment when the babe of the manger became the Christ of the cross.

III. See the recipients. This good

news first shared with the shepherds was to bring peace to all men in whom God found pleasure. "The peace that Jesus brought was reconciliation between God and man and the corollary reconciliation between man and his fellows. This peace is possible for individuals 'of God's good pleasure' even in the midst of the chaos, tensions and hatreds of human society" (Broadman Commentary, Vol. 9, p. 30). This peace is not dependent upon anything but the divine initiative of God.

During the next 15 years, we as Southern Baptists are going to be an-

nouncing the good news to all the people in our world. Let the joy and peace of Christ reign in us as we share the good news.

*Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing.
Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills,
and plains*

Repeat the sounding joy.

—Isaac Watts

Kay is pastor, First, Calhoun City.

Accepting responsibility

By David W. Spencer

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-21, 31-32

As we in the church deal with those outside (and even sometimes within the church), we are likely to hear the old excuse, "It's not my fault." Few people seem to want to take responsibility for the mess they make of their lives. While much counseling serves a good purpose, sometimes we seek analysis in hopes of finding somebody to blame instead of ourselves. If we could just discover some "bad gene" or "failed parent," we think we could justify some of our problems.

This excuse was apparently very popular in Ezekiel's time. Those were tough times for Israel and many people sought to blame someone else for their misery. God gave Ezekiel a message to share with the people who

believed they were helpless and trapped by the sins of their forefathers. We might say that Ezekiel had "some bad news and some good news."

I. The bad news (1-4, 19-20)

The bad news that Ezekiel brought was bad only to those who were looking to avoid any personal responsibility for their sins. During the final days of Judah before the fall to Babylon and during the captivity in a foreign land, many of the people blamed their fathers and grandfathers for the mess they were in. The people felt that they were paying the price for other people's mistakes and were victims of circumstance.

That's a convenient "cop-out" in any generation. It's much easier to blame someone else for our misery and our sin. People take drugs and get drunk

to escape responsibility for bad times. People get divorces because "my spouse just doesn't understand me." Youths become rebellious because their parents "just don't understand." We must not allow circumstances to change us, but we must change our circumstances.

God removed this convenient crutch of corporate responsibility and laid it on the individual (in verse 3). In verse 4 God pressed home the idea of individual accountability by saying that "the soul (or person) who sins shall die." This point was stressed again in verse 20. Taken together, verses 1-4 and 19-20 brought an advancement in theology before Israel. No longer could anyone say, "I'm such a sinner but you know it's not really my fault!" Ezekiel's new theology brings respon-

sibility down from the nation to the individual. For anyone who wants to hide from responsibility, this is bad news. God's Word says that you're responsible for your own life.

II. The good news (21, 31-32)

For anyone who knows that he is lost in sin and wants to do something about it, Ezekiel's message is good news! We do not have to be victims of circumstances beyond our control. We do not have to feel hopelessly trapped in a life of sin and consigned to hell. The good news is that God treats everybody as individuals!

Verse 21 may be the best news we'll ever hear. It says that what's happened in the past does not necessarily have to happen in the future. Verse 31 says we can start all over again with a new heart. Verse 32 says God is on

our side! God is not out to see how many he can send to hell or how many times he can catch us in sin. He's not some patrolman hiding in the bushes with a radar gun, hoping to catch speeders. God doesn't want one person to go to hell and will do everything short of overruling our wills to see that we go to heaven! It can make quite a difference in living if you remember that God is on your side.

These final verses speak a powerful word to anyone who wants his life to be changed. The past sins of our lives do not have to determine our future because here in the present God can transform our lives through the power of the blood of Jesus Christ!

Spencer is pastor, First, Long Beach.

Visions of earthly kingdoms and god's kingdom

By J. Gerald Harris

Daniel 7:17-22; 8:19-25

Daniel wanted to know the great events of the future. He read the prophecies of Jeremiah for understanding (Dan. 9:2). He prayed for knowledge (Dan. 9:3). Consequently, God revealed the future to Daniel through visions; and by these visions Daniel was able to look down the corridors of time with the telescope of faith and see the future unfolded. In our focal passage we shall give some consideration to the meaning of two of these visions.

I. The Saints and the Spoiler (7:17-22)—The four beasts in v. 17 seem to represent gentile kings and kingdoms. Even in our day the insignia of many Gentile nations are beasts or birds of prey. For example, there is the Russian Bear, the British Lion, the Chinese Dragon, and the American Eagle. The kingdoms of this earth are characteristically bestial and bloodthirsty. A day is coming, however, when the rule will be transferred from beasts to saints.

In v. 18 we have a reference to "the saints of the Most High." It is true that the church will rule and reign with Christ, but the "saints" here do not

represent the church. There were saints in Israel before the church came into existence, and there will be saints on earth during the tribulation after the rapture of the church. The saints of whom Daniel was thinking were his own beloved people. These saints are the people of Israel saved during the tribulation. This must be the case because Daniel does not speak of the church saints in any of his writings. Also, Daniel's personal history was a type and prophecy of the future of his own people, Israel.

In v. 19 Daniel's thoughts turn to the fourth beast or fourth kingdom. Out of this kingdom came 10 horns and yet another "which came up, . . . that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." This is a description of the Antichrist referred to by Isaiah as the spoiler (Isa. 16:4-5).

At first the Antichrist will appear to be a benevolent ruler. His charisma, power, and persuasiveness will capture the hearts of the people. He will make a pact with the Jews and promise them peace in their own land. However, midway through the tribula-

tion, the Spoiler will break his promise to the Jews and demand to be worshiped and provoke a full-scale war with the saints of God.

War and bloodshed will characterize the last days of the tribulation until the coming of "The Ancient of Days" (v. 22). The term "Ancient of Days" is a reference to Jehovah God or, more likely in this case, to the Trinity and implies the only member of the trinity actually ever observed, Jesus. Christ will descend from heaven with "the armies which were in heaven" (Rev. 19:14) and overthrow the Antichrist and establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace in this earth for a thousand years.

II. The Ram and the Goat (8:19-25)—This vision graphically portrayed a ram with two horns and a goat with "a notable horn between his eyes" (v. 5). We are told that the angel Gabriel was commissioned to interpret this vision to Daniel (v. 16). The interpretation has a primary application which serves to highlight a greater prophetic application (see v. 19).

It is believed that the ram represents the Medo-Persian empire

with Cyrus and Darius as the two kings (v. 20). The "rough goat" represents the king of Greece; the "great horn" symbolizes the first king, Alexander the Great (v. 21). After Alexander, four kings and kingdoms would rise up out of Greece.

Many believe the "king of fierce countenance" in v. 23 represents Antiochus Epiphanes and, indeed, the following verses seem to give credibility to that interpretation. Antiochus Epiphanes became a powerful king, but angered his subjects with an intolerance of religion. He horrified the Jews by stripping the temple of every reminder of their religious heritage and set up an image of Jupiter in the holy of holies. He tore down the defenses of Jerusalem, initiated the sacrifice of swine, and prohibited circumcision. For these reasons the name of Antiochus Epiphanes has become synonymous with the Antichrist.

At last we read that this one represented by Antiochus Epiphanes "shall stand up against the Prince of Princes." This is a reference to the Antichrist standing up against the Lord Jesus Christ. Note, however, that it

says, "he shall be broken without hand" (v. 25). This refers to the hand of men. When the overthrow of the Antichrist comes, it will be apparent that man himself will not put this arrogant mortal out of the way. He will be smitten by the Lord, whom he will have denied and opposed.

Harris is pastor of Colonial Heights, Jackson.

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Devotional

The first Christmas

By Don Nerren

Luke 2:6-7

The Holy Bible tells us that in the fulness of time, God sent forth his only Son, Jesus.

There is much that has been written on "The Politics" of the first Christmas. Much has been written about the decree that went out from Caesar Augustus that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. The exact time of such a census has been debated far and wide by many good Christian scholars.



Nerren

The one true fact remains, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem's manger of peasant parents, and this was God's time.

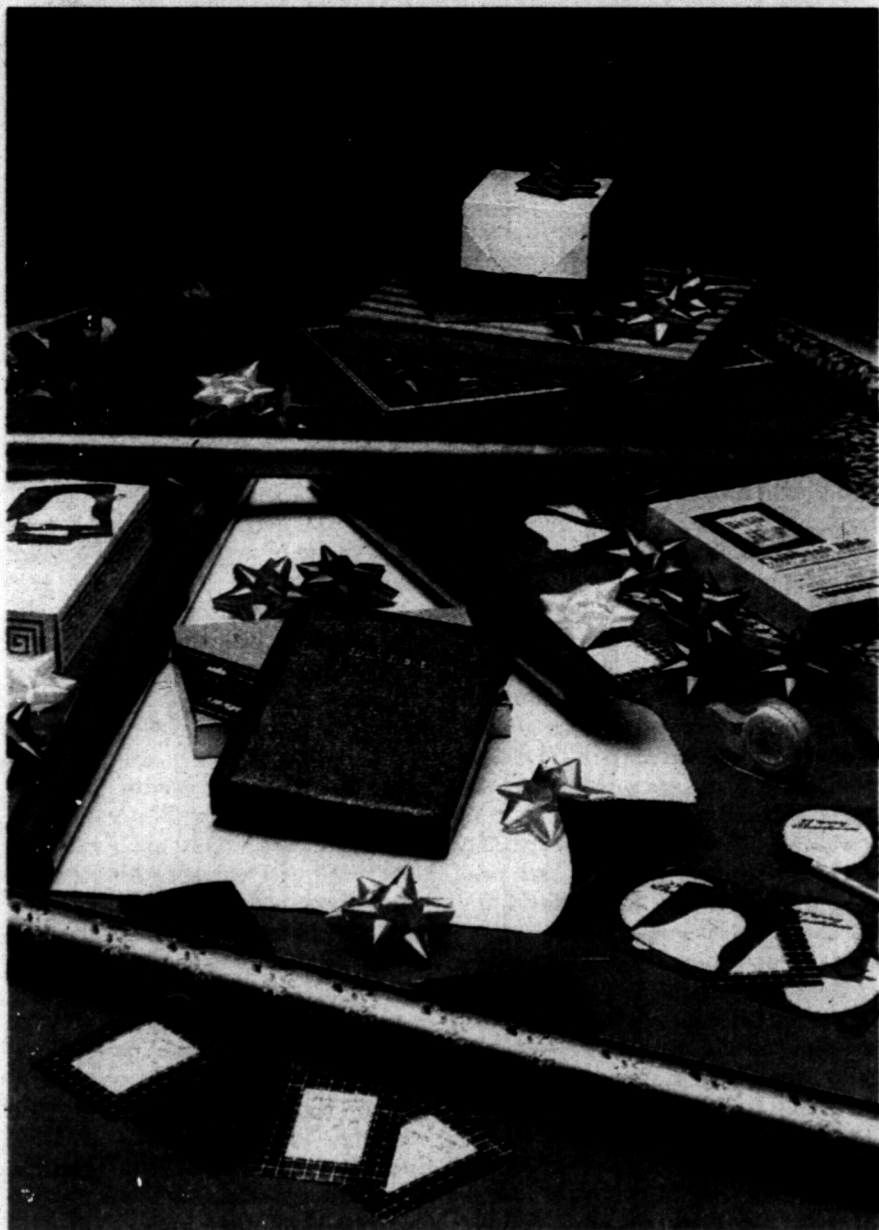
Galatians 4:4-5 tells us that the Son of God was born of a virgin woman and born under the law, and that he would redeem those who were under the law so that we might be adopted into the family of God as sons of God.

Does it really matter if Jesus was actually born in December 25 or on January 6? Does it really matter if Jesus was born in A.D. 1 or as early as 7 B.C.?

The glory of it all is that God so loved this world so much that he was born a man in flesh and blood and that the time was right. That is our worship and therein lies the hope of all mankind. Jesus, the Son of God, came down here to live in our midst, and soon suffered and died on an old rugged cross at Calvary. Then on the third day he was alive again, and forever more. One glorious "day break" this same Jesus is coming back to this world to receive his church home.

The real meaning of the first Christmas is not bound up in dates and schedules. The real meaning of the first Christmas Day is that our wonderful Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem's manger and that he came to die and be resurrected for all mankind. This is the glory of Christmas Day.

Nerren is pastor, Center Hill Baptist Church, Hamilton.



Christmas lights and us

From the morn of creation,
after a long, long night
The Word is come forth
"Let there be light."

To herald forth the day
and to illumine the night
Dispel darkness and fear
Its gloom and its doubt
To rid man of ignorance
His supersitition and fright
To usher in love
Rather than might makes right.
From Eden's glad morn,
To the star in the East
To Easter's bright gleams,
Bringing victory and release
To Pentecost's power
Through the dark ages of night
God has left us mortals
With a legacy of light!

The torches of Christmas Past
have been passed on to us
Said He, "Ye are lights,
You're heritage and trust."
So as we ponder the season,
and what it's all about

May we each one,
become a king of a light.
For other ways of light
have not been found

Except that through us
That His might abound!
Not like Christ's to die
That darkness might go
We're only asked to live
That His light may show!
Now a light is to shine
Not under a bushel to be
Not to be seen,

but that others may see
Some lights gleam and glow
while others twinkle quite low
But shine? "Yes, it will"
That's its purpose, you know.
A contagious smile

a helping hand of simple prayer
Going the second mile, or an
Encouraging word that says "I care"
These things we all have,

that can brighten someone's day
That costs us so little,
But to others their bouquet!
Yesterday's in the tomb of time

The tomorrow's in the womb
We have only our todays
May our light shine as noon.
Let not history say of us
who were given of the light
"That we received it not,
and gave up the fight."

For today, long after,
the true light came
Opportunities for shining,
are still much the same.
For there's no master switch
and there's no magic way
To rid us of darkness,
and to usher in the Day
Except that we
who are declared to be Light
Keep right on shining
all through the night!

—Bernard Phelps
Pilgrim's Rest (Panola)



Student Day at Christmas

Itawamba Junior College students study for final exams by the Christmas tree in the Baptist Student center in Fulton. Student Day at Christmas is observed by Baptist churches to allow students to share what is happening in their lives, and for the local church to understand what Baptist Student Union does. (See story about Itawamba on page 4). Pictured from left are Pam Walden, accounting major from Amory; Patrick Beard, church vocations major from Fulton; and Mollye Weatherbee, accounting major from Amory. Wayne Vandiver is BSU director. (Tim Nicholas photo).

A story for Christmas

A generous gesture on the part of a Montana Baptist pastor came just in time to soften the blow of a personal disaster of his educational director.

Each year, Mississippi Baptists, through their Brotherhood Department, sponsor the Montana Suits Project. The project provides new suits to pastors in three states. This year, more than 130 applications were sent to pastors in Montana and North and South Dakota.

This year, Carlston "Red" Berry of Bozeman, Mont., returned his application with a note to Paul Harrell, Mississippi Brotherhood director. The note suggested that Berry's education director, Jerry Neiminen, had a greater financial need for a suit than he, and that if only one suit could be sent, to send it to Neiminen.

Harrell wrote to Berry explaining that the limited amounts of funds would not provide suits for both Berry and Neiminen, but that he was processing the application for Neiminen.

On Dec. 1, Berry wrote Harrell: "How timely is God's providence! Your letter . . . arrived in the mail the morning after Jerry and Penny's (Neiminen) mobile home burned to the ground, destroying all their clothes but their pajamas. Referring to Jerry as 'someone in greater need is an understatement. Your gift of a suit will now be infinitely more important! They had no insurance. My thanks to all of you for your generosity.'"

Gifts to help fund the Montana Suit Project may be addressed to the Mississippi Brotherhood Department, Box 530, Jackson, Miss., 39205, phone 668-3800.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**

Nashville, Tennessee

Editorials by don mcgregor

The love in Christmas

In looking along rows of Christmas cards in display racks, one is likely to see one with such a message as "Christmas means love."

That is certainly the case; for the scripture says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." And that was Christmas.

Through the ages Christmas has become the most significant observation among Christians. It has been so significant that it became a holiday, which, as is obvious, comes from the concept of holy day. But holy day, a religious observation, became holiday, a time off from work.

All the world liked our Christmas holiday and began to observe it. Eventually the holiday lost just about all of its religious significance. Now it stands for the most gigantic, world-wide spending spree that history has ever known about.

And that's all right. We go back to the love concept, and we give loved ones gifts at Christmas. We give them things that perhaps they need but wouldn't buy for themselves otherwise.

Now, however, Christmas has become an issue of judicial debate as the United States Supreme Court argues about whether or not religious symbols of Christmas should be allowed in public displays.

There is very little we can do to change all of that, evidently. We can complain, but not many will listen. Everyone is so involved in making merry at Christmas that they don't have time to give consideration to those who want to effect a change in the atmosphere.

What we can do is be positive in our

own Christmas observation. It is very easy to get caught up in all of the frenzy that accompanies the secular observation of Christmas and forget why we began to celebrate it. We can remember and remind all of those about us that Christmas is the time for observing the birth of the Redeemer. He is the central figure in the total concept of Christianity. His birth was so important that our calendar is dated from that time.

The main purpose in our observation of that occasion is not to spend money at a fast enough clip to singlehandedly spur on the economy. It is to remember that we are observing the time that has been set aside to denote the fact that God took on flesh and began to dwell among the people. He did that in order to become the Savior, the Redeemer, for a people who had lost the way from the beginning.

It is a time of love, for it was love

that compelled the Lord to send his son on that mission. And in love the greatest gift that we can give the world is the message that Jesus has come, and he has become the Redeemer for all who will accept him.

In that attitude of love, we at the Baptist Record would like to wish for all our readers a meaningful Christmas observation and the hope for a happy and rewarding new year.

We are—
Don McGregor
Tim Nicholas
Anne McWilliams
Evelyn Keyes
Florence Larrimore
Renee Walley
Betty Anne Bailey
Irene Martin

We have enjoyed serving you throughout this year. We look forward to continuing to do so for many years to come.

Guest opinion . . .

On the threshold of a new century (Christmas Eve 1999)

Part two of two parts
By John Martens

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of a fictionized story begun last week that tells about two military listening posts on the Island of Greenland—one American and one Russian. Last week's presentation ended as the Russian intelligence man was seeking to make contact with the American.

Putting the earphones back on again, Bill listened with astonishment how a sonorous voice with an unmistakable accent in otherwise faultless English tried to make contact. Betraying a slight tremulation, the voice said with a certain urgency: "American friend, listen to me for a moment or two, while we can talk safely. Right now we are having here in the North of Siberia a display of Aurora Borealis or Northern lights. You know as well as I do that under the attendant atmospheric and radio conditions I can safely make contact with you, and that is just what I wanted to do for a long time. My call to you cannot be monitored due to the interruption of internal radio communications through the effects of Aurora Borealis while I can freely and undetectedly signal you.

"You remember, I tried to contact you almost a month ago. I had to stop abruptly, for the Northern lights suddenly disappeared, and I was getting in danger of being discovered. Now I can talk to you again; and if I stop in mid-sentence, know then that the Northern Light has suddenly disappeared from the sky. But now I can still see it play through the little plastic window of my Arctic hut in the darkness of the sky and reflect on the snowdrifts outside."

Bill acknowledged the call. He indeed remembered how about a month ago an unmistakably Russian voice had called on him with a few words—

it had been no more than half a sentence—only to fall still after a few seconds. At that time Bill did shrug it off as perhaps another one of the misleading tricks of his intelligence counterparts over the horizon. This time, however, there was more time for the far-away caller to have his say. Bill listened with immense surprise to the words of his Russian colleague.

"American Friend, I know this is to you the most important day of the whole year. And on this evening, on what you call Christmas Eve in this last year of the 20th century, which saw our two countries rise so dramatically to undreamt pinnacles of power, I do wish you moments of happiness and fond thoughts. I know you think of your loved ones at home as I often do myself. For it is not very long ago when we were still children and basked in the glow of the affection of our parents and brothers and sisters.

"And now we have to amuse ourselves here all by ourselves in the meager light of the Northern Stars."

Then the Russian continued and Bill concentrated his attention even more on the words of the unknown speaker:

"I know tomorrow you celebrate the Birth of a Prince of Peace, whom you honor. And so do I myself, for his name is not entirely unknown in our country and is revered by many of my compatriots. Know then that to this Prince of Peace also I myself render homage, although in our country it is better not to publicly refer to Him."

When Bill was able to put in a few words of his own, he told the unknown caller that he was delighted to share with him the mood of Christmas Eve and the spirit of peace but above all a respectful remembrance of the Birth of the Prince of Peace.

Then Bill mentioned the stillness of

the Polar night and asked his Russian counterpart if he knew about the Gospel Story of Jesus' birth in another night long ago, a night in which, in the imagination of most of us, a star-studded sky was the backdrop for a host of singing angels. Oh yes. It may, in fact, have been a cloudy, overcast night or perhaps drizzling or raining.

But then the weather did not matter much on the night Jesus was born, and in the same way the Arctic darkness of the Polar night could not prevent two young men from sharing in a common desire for peace and goodwill.

Hurriedly now the Russian told a bit of his life story. He knew indeed of the Gospel narrative, so he told Bill.

"Listen," he said, "long ago, hundreds of years ago, in fact it is over 700 years, my forefathers were deported to the Altai Mountains of Central Asia from Silesia in Germany by the invading Mongol hordes from the East. The Mongols threatening to overrun Europe were finally stopped and driven back after the Battle of Liegnitz in Silesia in 1254 A.D., but not before they had transferred thousands of German artisans and miners to what is now Soviet Central Asia. The Germans had been very useful to the Mongols by their skills as smiths and armourers. They were allowed to settle in their own villages and prospered, preserving their language, culture, and Christian religion. After many years the region where they were resettled by the Mongols became part of the Russian Czarist Empire, and the descendants of the German exiles became Russian citizens.

"In the time of the Reformation, specimens of Luther's Bible in the German language had reached the German settlers in the Altai mountains, for somehow contact with their

homeland never completely ceased. And, so the Russian told Bill many a family still possessed an ancient Bible in the German vernacular; and that's how the story of Jesus' birth was known to young and old."

Bill's astonishment knew no bounds on hearing the Russian's dramatic account of his people's past vicissitudes. Urgently, even more hurriedly came the Russian's voice now:

"Seems that the Northern Light is beginning to wane. I must call off now soon; expect me to stop abruptly any moment, American friend; think of me once and a while. I love Peace, and I know you do. I love with you the Prince of Peace, the Savior, of which Luther's Bible and your Scriptures speak. Perhaps we can talk again, or perhaps never more will we hear sometime each other's voices in praise of the Prince of Peace, but . . ." then in a sudden sharp crackle and a long whistle from the receiver, contact ceased abruptly.

Bill looked out through his little window opening. Was that the sound of plane engines again up North? Or was it the wind increasing in strength and sound? Tomorrow would be Christmas day and soon a brand new century would dawn. Could it be a Christmas of hope and a century of peace after the bloodsoaked 20th century? And Bill was sure his Russian counterpart was one with him and all humanity in longing for a world where "peace on earth" was a reality and not just a piously mumbled catchword, over and again repeated every year especially when Christmas Eve and Christmas were drawing near.

Again a short beep from the radio receiver, and again Bill listened through his earphones. But there was no follow-up. But somewhere two (Continued on page 8)

"We have seen His star...
and have come to worship Him" Matt. 2:2



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